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Pictures of Life.

THE SISTERS.

CHAPTER I.

No one would have believed them to be sisters—yet theirs they were: loving each other with warm passion than calm affection; for they had passed no great part of their lives together. They were at their window, watching the fiery glow of the sunset, burning itself upon the golden limes and copper-colored beeches on the other side of the road, and struggling through the blackness of a great yew overshadowing one half their garden.

Mildred, the elder, stood erect; the rich light falling full upon her broad brow and dark eyes. Those eyes did not flinch or melt to veil themselves from the radiance; rather, they seemed to dilate, as if endeavoring to receive all the glory. Against Mildred, a slighter figure leaned; a pale head lay upon her shoulder, somewhat shaded by the thick tresses that, though looped up behind, fell loosely and her dress upon each side of a stately throat. It was some time since either had spoken, when Mildred said:

"Do you think he loves you, Millie?"

Millie's head had sunk a deal lower at this question, and slightly tender or she glanced down upon its delicate face, and saw how the drooping mouth drooped yet more, and the faint color caused tears or no spoke. She threw herself a great deal further back than she had been, and leaned on a cushion at her feet, having quite no answer. Mildred repeated her question, leaning her head caressingly over the other's shoulder, and resting against it, as she did so. No word yet; but Millie moved forward, she caught the last flicker of a smile dying from off the rosy mouth, and took it for a sufficient reply.

"Very much, Millie?" she said, "so need for further question. God bless you!" Then she added, "Is he very good?" Millie's soft, little hand crept into Mildred's. She did not cry out, but her sister's fervent clasp pained her.

"Millie must not have liked to speak of this matter to me, or she would not have waited for such words: but it troubled I should have no plan for the future. We have only one to take care of each other. Millie said, "we must not be separated, need we? Why may I not live with you? You will stay with me always, dear?"

"It is impossible, Millie," was said very gently.

"Why impossible?" Millie asked, earnestly, indeed, I can't do without you."

"You will learn to do without me, child. Now! I shall just leave you till there is some one else to care for you. You are one of those who ought always to have some round you, Millie."

"You may leave me? You say you love me still? If you think I could be happy with Edward, it is not kind of you to do so? You will have to go back again; and hadn't I better go too at a convenient season?"

"I go back again? Never! I am not going to be married. I do not like the idea of your being poor will make any difference, or even to you, Millie, I have always longed to be rich."

Millie lifted up her eyes, and said quietly:

"Oh, Mildred I did not mean that. But I should not like—he's not rich—and—"

"I see. But you are not penniless even now: you shall still be a bit of a better. And Mildred then first conceived a resolution she afterwards acted out.

"But, Mildred, was not your aunt kind? Oh, if I had but known you were not happy!" Millie spoke so earnestly that tears came into her eyes. "Why didn't you write?"

"Do you think I was going to tell you all my wild troubles, child? I bore them; and they did not break my spirit. Indeed, if I had been a meek, mean, hypocritical creature, I might have been very comfortable."

With what scorn she said the last word!

"If I wanted to go back to my touch," she added, "I could not. I lost all chance of restatement by coming to you. Mine was too good a place to be empty long. I had a spiteful letter from the old lady this morning, bidding me an affectionate farewell, and telling me of an amiable and accomplished cousin of mine who is filling my place to the old lady's entire satisfaction; reminding me, too, that I could not live on the miserable pittance left me by my father!"

"You had other letters, hadn't you, Mildred?"

"One from this same lady in answer to an epistle of mine. His is so polite that I feel mine was unnecessarily bitter. He talks about duty to those nearest him compelling him to do what is painful, and such stuff as that. For hope he said—for his own conscience, however."

"Your other letter?"

Mildred looked fearlessly into Millie's inquiring eyes; but a richer color came into her cheeks as she answered:

"An enclosure in my aunt's. A cruel letter," she went on dreamily; "yet it pleases me well enough. Truly it has been somewhat long in reaching me—five, six months—well! I think it was about that, you send it all, though it wasn't out of kindness you did so. I shall see now what truth there is in some of these fine words. If they are true, why then, the world is not so bitter but a smile may make it appear for occasionally. But tell me, Millie, child, is it true that men are deceivers ever? Do you expect to find any man constant, loving one for oneself alone?"

"I would I were dead if not," Millie answered faintly.

"Is it so, Millie?" Mildred said, half-startled at the fervency of that low reply. Stooping down, she pressed a kiss on the girl's forehead, saying, "that is right; be thorough in all your life."

"Dear Mildred, some of us have to suffer; so one suffers thoroughly who does not suffer patiently."

"Suffer! You shall not know much about suffering if I can help it. Now, tell me," she went on, "what does this mysterious friend of yours, whose name I have not heard you name yet, what does he look like?"

"Very soon—say day. Oh, Mildred! when you see him, you will think it strange that he cares for such a girl as I am. I never could fancy it true, that he liked me much, till—till he was very tender or she glanced down upon the delicate face, and saw how the drooping mouth drooped yet more, and the faint color caused tears or no spoke. She threw herself a great deal further back than she had been, and leaned on a cushion at her feet, having quite no answer. Mildred repeated her question, leaning her head caressingly over the other's shoulder, and resting against it, as she did so. No word yet; but Millie moved forward, she caught the last flicker of a smile dying from off the rosy mouth, and took it for a sufficient reply.

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Congressional News.

PHILADELPHIA:
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1850.

THIRTY-FOURTH CONGRESS.

SENATE.

Mr. Bell presented a petition of citizens of Tennessee, praying for the passage of a law to prohibit the circulation of bank notes of a less denomination than $5